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Merry-Go-Round

Garrison Faces Morals Charge

Jack Anderson

THE Orleans Parish Grand Jury is investigating a charge that New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison sexually molested a 13-year-old boy at the city's posh Athletic Club.

The allegation, based on statements by the boy's father, was filed by the New Orleans Crime Commission with Grand Jury Foreman William J. Krummel Sr. A November 5, 1969, letter from Crime Commission Director Aaron Kohn to Krummel, detailing the charge, has now been obtained by this column.

Garrison has denied the charge, an authoritive official said. Persistent efforts to reach Garrison for comment failed.

The allegation was made by a prominent member of the New Orleans "Establishment" whose brother is one of the most respected men in the South.

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KOHN, as director of the privately financed Crime Commission, would confirm for the record only that the text of the letter obtained by this column was authentic.

"On a Sunday in June, 1969," the Commission letter to the Grand Jury states, "at the New Orleans Athletic Club, District Attorney Jim Garrison conducted himself in a manner which, if true, would be in violation of Louisiana criminal laws."

The laws in question punish "indecent behavior with juveniles" and "crime against nature, attempt," the letter went on.

The letter then states that the father spoke to three men about the incident and all three had "separately and independently communicated" the father's accusation to Kohn. This column read the allegation to the father who confirmed it with a minor addition.

"In brief," said the letter to the Grand Jury, the father "alleged that on a Sunday in June, 1969, he and his two teen-age sons were swimming in the nude at the New Orleans Athletic Club.

"Garrison invited them to the slumber room to relax and take a nap. In that room, Garrison twice fondled the genitals of the younger son, 13 years old (name omitted by this column). The elder son (name omitted) then age 19, openly denounced Garrison at the (club).

"It is hoped that your Grand Jury will see fit to call before it for testimony without the presence of any of Mr. Garrison's staff the three men spoken to by the father, the father himself and the sons," said the letter.

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UNDER Louisiana law, the "indecent behavior" count carries a maximum year in jail and $500 fine. A "crime against nature" carries a $2000 fine and five years in jail, but merely an "attempt" cuts the penalty in half.

There is an irony in the charges. Garrison has frequently brought the element of perversion and sex into his own cases.

In his most famous national case, the prosecution of Clay Shaw for conspiring to kill President Kennedy, Garrison's office made much of Shaw's alleged homosexuality.

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